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BLOODLETTING.

Observations on Local Bloodletting, and on some New Methods of practising it. By JONATHAN OSBORNE, M.D. &c. &c.

OPENING the veins of the foot is a practice still resorted to in cases of obstructed menstruation by practitioners who must be above the influence of vulgar prejudice on the subject. The trials which I have made have not enabled me to arrive at a conclusion as to the question whether this practice possesses any advantage above general bloodletting. Bleeding from the veins of the tongue is another old practice now nearly forgotten, having been superseded by the more manageable mode of taking blood by leeches. By opening the veins on the back of the hands we can usually obtain blood with great facility when particular circumstances forbid bleeding in the arm. Bleeding from the jugular vein is not well suited for taking blood from the head, because the external jugular, which alone is within our reach, is supplied from the superficial veins of the neck, and principally from those of the larynx, but not from the interior of the head. Great benefit, however, may be derived from opening it in sudden attacks of croup.

The application of leeches is frequently a cause of great fatigue to the patient, from the length of time during which stupor with hot water is kept up in order to promote the hæmorrhage from the leech bites; and, in some cases, when this operation is continued under the bed-clothes, the damp communicated to these produces cold, and is uncomfortable to that degree as often to prohibit their use. All this is obviated by the application of warm cloths of linen or calico applied perfectly dry, and removed in succession according as they have become saturated. By these means the blood is absorbed by capillary attraction, a process which cannot take place with wet applications. When dry cloths are thus applied and renewed to cuts in the skin, or to leech bites, I have found the bleeding uniformly to continue as long as the application was kept up, it being required only to supply fresh portions of the dry cloth to insure the continuance of capillary attraction, and thus to prevent coagulation at the mouths of the vessels.

This mode of managing leeches I am thus particular in describing, as it has enabled me to apply them in a case in which, if wet cloths were used, very serious danger might arise. I allude to bronchitis, both acute and chronic, in which the application of leeches to the larynx and to the trachea in the triangular space between the mastoid muscles, has appeared to me to be the most decisive and immediately successful remedy of all those which I have ever employed. In laryngitis, their utility is obvious and commonly recognized, but in bronchitis it has escaped notice that the most immediate depletory process which can be performed on the mucous membrane of the bronchial tubes is that of leeching the trachea and larynx. It appears to remove blood not only from the mucous membrane of that part of the bronchial tube to which the application is made, but also from the whole tract of the bronchial tubes throughout their ramifications, being nearly equally efficacious in putting an end to the cough, when the remoter tubes are affected, as when the larynx is the chief seat of disease. This application is also of singular efficacy in stopping the cough of phthisis, inasmuch, that by resorting to it according as required in cases in the hospital, we have been enabled to secure sleep at night, and during the day to keep the phthisical patients so free from cough, that a superficial observer might readily believe that we had cured the disease.

It has been ascertained that leeches will continue to live and to draw blood, although immersed in water at a temperature considerably above 100°. Now, in cases of violent inflammation of the abdominal viscera, when local abstraction of blood and warm fomentations are both at the same time imperatively demanded, as soon as leeches have been applied to the abdomen the patient may immediately be placed in a hip bath, without waiting for them to fall off. Thus we may cause the relaxation and diminution of sensibility produced by the heat to combine with the benefit to be derived from the topical loss of blood.

The application of leeches to mucous surfaces was, I believe, first described by the Surgeon-General, Mr. Crampton. Although I have not met with any case of cynanche which required the direct application of leeches as advised by him, yet there can be no doubt as to the immediate benefit to be derived from it. I have resorted to the mode of applying leeches to other mucous membranes by passing a needle and thread through their tails, at about one-fourth of an inch from the extremity. This practice, so far from incapacitating them from action, causes them to bite with increased ardor, and, in fact, may be used to stimulate torpid leeches. The thread to be passed through the tail of the leech should be strong, and its extremities are to be held by the operator, while, if necessary, he may direct the mouth of the leech by a probe or channel made with a card, to the place where its services are required.

In certain headaches confined to the frontal sinus, which, although originally derived from derangements of the digestive organs, yet do not cease when those derangements have been removed, a prompt relief is obtained from applying leeches in this manner to the interior of the nostrils; and in those cases no benefit is usually derived from leeches externally applied. The bleeding is usually rather more copious than if

the application had been made on the skin ; if, however, it should be deficient, the patient may encourage it by breathing over the vapor of hot water.

In inflammations of the conjunctiva, a leech thus applied to the Schneiderian membrane of the adjacent nostril evidently unloads the vessels of the eye. This application I have found of great use after the previous application of leeches to the tarsal conjunctiva. It appeared to render the improvement derived from the latter permanent, and prevented the necessity of repeating it.

In inflammations of the ear, this mode of applying a leech inside the meatus is eminently useful ; and next to it in importance is the application of them behind the ear as near as may be to the meatus. It may be objected, that such applications are not well suited to inflammations of the internal parts of the ear, inasmuch as those are supplied by a different set of vessels from the external. But the effect of leeches is independent of vascular connection. For example :—in inflammations of the stomach or intestinal canal, the benefit derived from leeches applied to the corresponding region of the abdomen is acknowledged by all ; but the vascular connection between those parts is as remote as that between distant regions of the body, the one being supplied from the arteries arising from the abdominal aorta, and the other from the epigastric and mammary arteries ; and that there can be no anastomosis of vessels is evident from the interposition of the peritoneum, which insulates the viscera completely from the anterior parietes of the abdomen. The same observation applies with the same force to the thoracic viscera and to the brain. In all those cases, however, the effect of local bleedings is proved so repeatedly in our daily experience, that the inability of satisfactorily explaining the way in which the effect is produced must not be allowed for one moment to press against the evidence of facts.

In inflammation of the mucous membranes of the bowels, especially of the rectum, the French practitioners apply leeches to the margin of the anus. If the leeches take externally, no benefit is derived ; and to apply them internally is often difficult, on account of the violent contractions of the sphincter. Those contractions also prevent any considerable quantity of blood being obtained from the bites. I have employed a method of taking blood from the rectum which obviates these inconveniences.—*Dublin Medical Journal.*

PIGMIES AND GIANTS.

UNDER "anomalies of volume," M. Saint-Hilaire has assembled several curious particulars relating to dwarfs. The word dwarf, in scientific language, should be confined to individuals whose diminished stature depends not on disease or malformation, but in a diminished volume of all the parts of the body. Among the most celebrated of this class of beings were Jeffrey Hudson (well known to all our English readers through Sir Walter Scott's "Peveril of the Peak"), Borwaliski and Nicholas Ferry, surnamed Bébé. The latter was born in 1741, at Plaines ; both his father and mother were of ordinary stature. Even the birth of this

little being had something extraordinary. He came into the world two months before his time ; weighed but then a pound ; was brought to church in a plate, and cradled in a wooden shoe (*sabot*). When five years old, the little *Bebé* was examined by the physician to the Duchess of Lovrain ; at that period he weighed nine pounds ; was about twenty-two inches high, and was completely formed like a young man of twenty years. *Bebé* now passed into the service of Stanislaus, king of Poland, and became the favorite of that unfortunate monarch ; he was gay, well made, and agreeable, but his intelligence always remained extremely low. When fifteen years of age, the dwarf had attained the height of twenty-nine inches, and seemed to arrive at the period of puberty ; but a sudden change was operated in his constitution ; his countenance became dull, and lost its vivacity ; his health rapidly declined, and *Bebé* died at the age of twenty-two, bearing every mark of a premature old age. There is a waxen statue of this celebrated dwarf in the anatomical museum of the *Ecole de Medecine* at Paris, dressed in the clothes which *Bebé* wore at the court of Poland. The figure is complete, and the face perfectly well formed. The skeleton is preserved in the museum of natural history. An examination of the skull shows a complete ossification of the bones, and obliteration of many of the sutures. The principal dimensions of the skeleton are as follows :—height two feet nine inches six lines ; length of arm one foot two inches nine lines ; ditto, of lower extremity, one foot four inches six lines ; length of humerus seven inches three lines ; length of femur nine inches.

Borwaliski, like *Bebé*, was born of parents above the ordinary stature ; but, unlike the Polish dwarf, he was endowed with a considerable share of intellect ; he spoke German and French with fluency, and his answers were said to evince some smartness, if not wit. This dwarf was twenty-eight inches high. When aged twenty-two, *Borwaliska* took unto himself a wife, who presented him with several well-made and large children. His paternity indeed was doubted by many, but the little man received the pleasantries of his friends with a good grace.

From these, and many other cases detailed by the author, we see how much dwarfs may vary, both in their physical and moral conditions : some pass rapidly from infancy to old age ; others enjoy good health to an advanced period ; the greater part are simple, almost idiotic ; yet a few, like *Borwaliski*, have shown considerable intelligence. Dwarfs are usually born at the full period of gestation, and of ordinary-sized parents ; they are almost universally impotent, either with individuals of the usual size, or with one another, as is fully proved by the experiments of *Catharine de Medicis*, and the Electress of Brandenburg. The pleasures of love quickly destroy them.

The history of giants is somewhat more remarkable than that of dwarfs. The proofs of their existence in olden times, may be reduced to three heads. 1st. The discovery of certain bones of enormous magnitude, 2nd. The testimony of the Bible. 3rd. That of several profane authors. The immense progress which we have made in later years in zoology, and history of fossils, enables us to appreciate the first set of proofs at their full value ; in fact the pretended bones of giants are nothing but the

ossil remains of the elephant, the mastodon, &c. Besides, if we examine with any care the history of these discoveries, the incongruities become manifest. One of the most celebrated giants of this kind, was the one discovered in Sicily in the fourteenth century. It was at once decided that this was no less a personage than Polyphemus, and that he must have been at least 300 feet high; a respectable stature, certainly, which might satisfy the most enthusiastic amateur in giants. Unfortunately, it was afterwards proved that the cave in which the pretended giant of 300 feet was found, holding in his hand a mast of a ship as a walking cane, was itself only 30 feet high. Polyphemus may serve as a type for the history of other giants said to be found in different quarters of Europe. As to the proofs taken from the Bible, they admit of an easy explanation. The stature of Goliath was said to be six cubics and a span, which, from the best calculations, make about nine feet; if we consider that the cap of Goliath was included in this measurement, his height may be estimated at eight or eight feet and a half, a stature consistent with the limits which observation has placed to the human race. In fact, the most authentic accounts which we possess, relating to individuals of extraordinary stature, establish the limit at about eight feet and a half, or nine feet. The analogy between giants and dwarfs is striking in more than one respect; their intellect is usually very moderate, and, like dwarfs, they are impotent, or readily weakened by venereal pleasures; they also die at an early age.

After a lengthened examination of hereditary varieties of stature in different species of animals, the author examines and establishes the principal variations of stature in the human race. We have already seen that the limits established by observation are confined between twenty eight or thirty inches for dwarfs, and eight feet and a half, or nine, for giants; but in addition to these anomalies, there are certain countries in which the inhabitants are naturally either above or below the ordinary standard; the inhabitants of the most southern parts of America, the Esquimaux and Boschimans, are familiar examples of an elevated or diminished standard. In these hereditary differences of stature, we find an easy solution of the pretended stories of pigmies and giants; for we can readily conceive, that in a country where the average height of the male inhabitants is more than six feet, many examples of extraordinary stature will present themselves, and *vice versa*. The following table will serve to indicate the most remarkable of those variations.—*Lancet*.

Nations.	Stature.		Designation of the race.	Authors from whose Accounts the Table has been drawn up.
	Feet.	Inches.		
Patagonians . . .	6	1	American.	La Girandis—Malaspina
New Zealanders .	5	7	Malay.	Lesson.
Otaheite Chiefs .	5	6	Ditto.	Lesson.
New Hollanders .	4	11	Ethiopian.	Quoy and Gaimard.
Kamtschatkans .	4	10	Mongolian.	Laperouse.
Esquimaux . . .	4	0	Ditto.	Ditto.
Boschimans . . .	4	0	Ethiopian.	Barrow—Peron.

OIL OF CROTON TIGLIUM.

On the Oil of the Croton Tiglium as a Purgative for Children. By
EDWARD AUGUSTUS CORY.

It is a matter of the greatest importance, in the treatment of the diseases of children, that the remedial agents employed should be palatable to the patient. A disease is frequently aggravated considerably by the forcible administration of nauseous medicine, especially where the head and chest are affected; indeed, this remark will apply to the generality of inflammatory affections. It is well known, that the active principle of the cathartics, usually administered to children, is calomel, it being the least unpleasant to the taste; but this remedy I am convinced, from multiplied experience, does not completely answer the required end, unless it be given in combination with other aperients, as jalap, rhubarb, &c. &c., which render it extremely disagreeable to the little patient. One of the most pleasant and efficient purgatives for children, with which I am acquainted, is the ol. croton., prescribed according to the following formula:—

R. Olei crotonis, gtt. ij.
Sacch. albi, 3 ij.
Pulv. acaciz, 3 ss.
Tinct. card. co., 3 ss.
Aq. q. s. ft. mist., 3 iiss.

Of this a child, five or six years old, may take two or three teaspoonfuls every three or four hours, until the bowels have been freely acted upon. I have been for some time in the daily habit of using this preparation in the treatment of the diseases of children, where a complete and speedy evacuation of the bowels is required. I have found it of admirable service as a purgative in cephalic and thoracic affections; it acts with great celerity, and occasionally produces a gentle vomiting, which is often salutary. I do not recollect one single instance where its action has been violent and dangerous, when given according to the formula directed. I strongly recommend its general use, and I feel confident that it will become a favorite medicine in all the morbid affections of children, where a quick, certain, active, and pleasant purgative is indicated. It may be proper to remark, that the croton oil I prescribe is procured from, and, I believe, prepared by, Messrs. Drew, Heyward, and Baiss, wholesale druggists, Great Trinity lane, Bread street. It appears to be of excellent quality.—*Lon. Med. and Surg. Jour.*

MEDICAL IMPROVEMENT.—NO. VIII.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

THE following anecdote of Dr. Rush merits the attention of every member of the profession.

As two young physicians once were conversing in his presence, one of them said, "When I finished my studies"—"When you finished your studies!" said the Doctor abruptly; "why, you must be a happy

man to have finished so young ! I do not expect to finish mine while I live."

It is comparatively easy to become a *finished* mechanic. An apprenticeship of seven years is sufficient to make a master-workman, in almost any trade. The case is very different with the learned professions. No one can ever be said, except in a figurative and relative sense, to be a finished divine, a finished lawyer, or a finished physician. A seven years' apprenticeship in obtaining a liberal education is first required, or should always be required, for rightly disciplining the mind, and never be dispensed with, unless under very peculiar circumstances, before a man is even fitted to commence professional studies with advantage. He cannot acquire what mechanics call the use of tools in a shorter time. Now, three years' appropriate studies are a very short period, to fit him to offer himself as a candidate for the duties of a profession. Hence, in common with the good English education, which every mechanic's boy ought to possess when he enters upon his apprenticeship, every professional man needs, in addition, ten years' close study, before he is fitted to enter upon his profession. If we add to these seven years of preparatory, and three of professional study, one or more years for traveling, attending various lectures, or even improving himself by teaching others, which time is often as profitably spent as any part of his life, the professional man will generally be about twenty-five years old, instead of twenty-one as is the case with the mechanic, before he enters upon the duties of his employment, as a tolerable master of his business.

It is true, that when our country was young and comparatively poor, much of this previous expenditure of time and money, and consequently of preparatory study, in many cases, was necessarily dispensed with. But the exceptions, whether numerous or few, only showed the utility of the general rule. Now, when there are ample opportunities for obtaining the best education, the reason for the dispensation no longer exists; and unless under very extraordinary circumstances, it is unpardonable for a young man to offer himself as a candidate, to enter upon the duties of a profession, before he is properly prepared.

No professional candidate, who has had this thorough education, feels as if he had "finished his studies." Study has now become his delight, and like Titus he seems to have lost a day when one has been unhappily spent without increasing his knowledge, strengthening his mind, or directly or indirectly fitting himself for increased usefulness. No, it can be only the very vain, superficial young man, or one who has unfortunately been misled by some self-sufficient teacher to think everything necessary to be known is taught and easily learned in his school, that imagines he has finished his studies.

There is a moral view of the subject, which imperatively demands the attention of every honest, humane man. Physic is not a trade, which is regulated by the laws of expediency, as to the quality of the wares which are offered for sale to the public. It is a *profession* made by its members, that is, a declaration, an assertion, that the candidate possesses knowledge, skill, and integrity, sufficient to entitle him to confidence. If he is not worthy of this confidence, he is guilty of a deception which jeopardizes the health and lives of his employers. "All lawful endeavors

to preserve our own life and the lives of others," are more peremptorily required of physicians than any other members of society, because they profess, they declare this to be the main business of the members of their body. At the present day, there is no such thing as honestly offering articles of inferior quality in the medical market. Even ignorance is no excuse, because knowledge is the main ingredient which belongs to the commodity. Without it, the article is counterfeit.

Every physician, however obscure his situation, must know that there are members of his profession, men of the highest talents, integrity, and acquirements, who assert that within the present century they have learned to employ conium, stramonium, sanguinaria, actæa, capsicum, strichnine, lead, silver, mercury, opium, quinine, alcohol, cantharides, ergot, elaterium, and many other articles, in such a way as to relieve many symptoms and complaints that were beyond the skill of their predecessors. Not only have new articles been discovered, but new properties in many that are old, which had scarcely been suspected to exist. Lead, cantharides, silver, mercury, opium, conium, &c., unless in insignificant doses, are now no longer dreaded as poisons. Definite tests have in most instances been discovered, so that no well-informed practitioner now has a greater dread of his remedy, than of disease or death. In those instances, in which a drachm of strong extract of conium, or of calomel, or of opium, or half an ounce of the best tincture of cantharides, is indicated in twenty-four hours, the physician may now decide upon safer principles than in many of those upon which tartar emetic and neutral salts were, in general, formerly administered.

Happily, such extreme cases do not occur every day; but when they happen, which must be the fact, more or less, with one or more of these articles, every year in extensive practice, it is not rash to meet them. The temerity is on the other side; it is with those who will trust such cases to almost certain destruction, without making an extra effort, which frequently proves successful. The physician, who has not knowledge and skill to employ such instruments in an efficient manner, is culpably behind his day, has not studied his profession as it now exists, and has grossly deceived the public, and perhaps himself, in pretending to treat diseases which are beyond his reach. He has not informed himself, he has not employed all the means in his power, he has not used all lawful endeavors to preserve life. Neither neglect, ridicule, nor contempt, can alter these facts, or make it excusable to overlook them. The opposition, calumny, and misrepresentation, which usually attend the introduction of new measures of importance, in a very great degree have had their day, and are gone by; the important points referred to are established, are a matter of historical record, and where they are not understood, the ignorance is now unpardonable. It is full as censurable, as to attempt to perform a capital operation in surgery without a proper knowledge of anatomy. In a moral point of view, professional omissions, which endanger health or life, are as culpable as positive offences. It might be well to have a professorship of ethics attached to every medical institution, in which the doctrines of moral obligation should be enforced as a necessary preparatory study.

It is, however, agreed, that every physician, with his present know-

ledge, is by no means fitted to wield such formidable weapons—but formidable only in the hands of those who do not know how to use them. Sir Gilbert Blane somewhere very justly compares the use of the efficient articles of the improved modern *materia medica*, by a physician who is unacquainted with their properties, to putting a sword into the hands of a madman. But a sharp instrument, in a skillful hand, is much more surely directed, and less liable to accidents, than a dull tool. An able practitioner never rests satisfied till he has learned how to employ the best instruments, and to apply them in the best manner.

Ignorance, carelessness, and inattention to his studies, in a professional man, argue an obtuseness of moral sentiment, and a deficiency of the common feelings of humanity. To sink a profession into a trade, and manage it as if it were a mechanical employment, shows an obliquity of character which few would be willing to have considered as belonging to them. Every one, therefore, who has the honor of his profession and the good of mankind at heart, must find it a source of the highest gratification in exerting all his powers in the cause of Medical Improvement.

S.

ELATERIUM IN ACUTE DISEASE.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—I have taken the liberty, without consulting the writer, to send you an extract of a letter from one of my most valued correspondents. I hope he may be induced to furnish the case at length, and that the public may hereafter possess all the particulars, sanctioned by the name of the ingenious prescriber.

“I have recently attended a very alarming case of pleuro-pneumonitis. The affection of the lungs not very considerable; that of the pleura so severe, that by the fourth day the pleuritic effusion entirely prevented the action of the right lung; the left lung also being much compressed. I believe I have told you that I am lately in the habit of giving elaterium freely, in those cases of inflammation which are particularly prone to serous effusion. In this case I gave the elaterium in pills, with a little calomel, lytta, digitalis, and squill. Within thirty-six hours, from thirty-six to forty hydragogue discharges were produced, by which the affection of the chest appeared to be entirely subdued. Respiration returned to all parts of the lungs, and the patient rapidly convalesced. I might remark, that when the elaterium was commenced, there was considerable coma, with delirium and subsultus tendinum.”

To me, the novelty of the practice, in employing elaterium successfully in an acute disease of the lungs, appears to be of such importance as to merit immediate publication. Typhoid pneumonia, in its various forms, is one of our most difficult diseases to manage. It is a very frequent complaint, and often suddenly fatal. Every new article, which is adapted to mitigate or remove any one of its severe symptoms, furnishes us with additional means, and increases the probability of recovery, as respects a given number of patients.

By this, I would not be supposed to undervalue the common methods

of treating atonic pneumonia. Acrid emetics, in large doses, such as sanguinaria, squills, senega, assisted by sulphate of zinc, with ipecacuanha, and perhaps sulphate of copper, or sulphate of mercury, sometimes almost work miracles in these engorgements of the lungs, and snatch the patient from the jaws of death. Very large doses of acrid emetics are often necessary, before an operation is produced in torpid cases. In the beginning, full doses of calomel, combined with opium enough to prevent catharsis for twelve hours, conjoined with large doses of sanguinaria, or some other acrid expectorant, and assisted by a diaphoretic regimen, as well as by external applications, will often break up the disease, or so modify it as to prevent a dangerous suffusion. I have long since noticed that elaterium debilitates less than any other powerful deobstruent and evacuant within my knowledge. It counteracts and removes the morbid condition of the system, at the same time that it evacuates. Whether its employment in pneumonia is original with my friend, I do not know; but as I have already said, to me the practice is new, and I hope it will attract the attention of our medical brethren. It is a season of the year when we may expect to meet with such cases, and it is of importance to be acquainted with every kind of good practice, that we may not be taken by surprise when we find a severe or anomalous variety of the disease.

• Yours, with much esteem and respect,

Middletown, Conn. Oct. 15, 1833.

THOMAS MINER.

MEDICAL CHARITABLE INSTITUTION.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

READING the article under the head of Medical Charity, published in the Journal of October 23rd, I was deeply impressed with the importance of the subject, and beg leave to make a few suggestions in relation to it which have occurred to my mind.

The project of the writer is one which must commend itself to every liberal and benevolent member of the profession. A "Charitable Institution," which shall provide for the pecuniary wants of the widows and orphans of the deceased members of the Faculty, and give aid and comfort to the respectable physician who is reduced by misfortune, or who by age or infirmity is unable to provide a comfortable subsistence—such an institution, reason, humanity and religion approve, and will lend their influence for its establishment and support.

To the question, How shall this laudable object be effected? I would inquire what substantial objections can be urged against making the *Massachusetts Medical Society* the desired Institution, and appropriating its present funds and a large share of the annual assessments to the contemplated purposes of Medical Charity? The members of the Mass. Med. Society would willingly dispense with the *public dinner*, which has annually cost the Society a large sum, and of which comparatively few of the *Fellows* have partaken. Other useless expenses of the Society might be dropped, not only without injury to the profession, but to the gratification, as I believe, of a large majority of the Society. Other

and still more beneficial results might be anticipated from the adoption of the plan proposed.

It is probable that at the present time not one half of the respectable and regularly authorized practitioners in the State, belong to the Mass. Med. Society; and it is notorious that the disinclination of our brethren to join the Association, arises from a dissatisfaction with the management of the concerns of the Society, and a full conviction that the benefits arising from a membership are not worth the expense. Now constitute the Mass. Med. Society a *Charitable Institution*, in addition to the legitimate and appropriate objects of a State *Medical Association*—dispense with its worse than useless expenditures—make it what it ought to be, a *State Society*—open the door for the admission of all duly qualified physicians—make membership one of the requisitions necessary for the claimants of your bounty—and very soon the number of the Society would be doubled, its usefulness doubly enhanced; and its respectability proportionably increased.

AN OLD MEMBER OF THE MASS. MED. SOCIETY.

[Saving that part of the foregoing, which speaks of dissatisfaction with the present management of the Medical Society, we fully coincide in the sentiments of our respected correspondent. Little doubt can exist in the mind of any one, as to the expediency of dispensing with the annual dinner, and all, we apprehend, must approve of adding so important a charity to the present objects of the Society. It is to be hoped the subject will be pursued, and impress favorably the members of the Society.—Ed.]

BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, NOVEMBER 6, 1833.

MOTION WITHOUT CONSCIOUSNESS.

In a late number of the Archives Générales, M. Chevreul has addressed a letter to M. Ampère, respecting what he terms a peculiar class of muscular movements. These movements occur when a weight being suspended to a cord, this is held in the hand by the other extremity. Under these circumstances, M. Chevreul observed that the pendulum began to move, and that the motion gradually increased to a certain point, at which it became nearly uniform. This experiment was first tried by suspending the pendulum over the surface of water, and it was inferred that the liquid itself had some agency in producing the phenomenon. To determine this point, it was held successively over the surface of mercury, over an anvil, and over the bodies of several animals, and in all these cases the motion was found to take place. Being, however, impressed with the idea that the number of bodies capable of producing this effect must be limited, M. Chevreul interposed between his pendulum and the water, &c., plates of glass, resin, &c. The effect which he had anticipated followed. The oscillations gradually diminished in extent, and at length ceased altogether. This succession of phenomena was repeated

several times, and with very remarkable constancy, whether the interposed body was held by himself or by an assistant. "The more extraordinary," says M. Chevreul, "these effects appeared, the more I felt the necessity of verifying whether they were really foreign to all muscular motion of the arm, as had been stated to me in the most positive manner. This led me to rest the right arm, which held the pendulum, on a wooden support, which I caused to advance at pleasure from the shoulder to the hand, and to return from the hand to the shoulder. I soon remarked that in the former case it decreased in proportion as the support advanced nearer to the hand, and that it ceased when the fingers which held the pendulum were themselves supported; whilst in the second case the contrary effect took place. From this I thought it very probable that a muscular motion, which occurred without my knowing it, caused the phenomenon, and I could not but attach importance to this consideration, inasmuch as I had some vague recollection of having been in a very particular state when my eyes followed the oscillations of the pendulum which I held in my hand."

Following up this idea, M. Chevreul repeated and varied his experiments. He found that if, whilst the pendulum oscillated over the mercury, a bandage was placed over his eyes, the motion soon diminished; but in this case the oscillation was not sensibly affected by the presence of those bodies which appeared to arrest them in the first experiments. He thus arrived at the conclusion that it was a real action of the muscles, though one unknown to himself, which gave motion to the pendulum, and that the oscillations, once commenced, were soon increased by the influence which the sight exercised in putting him into this particular state of disposition or tendency to motion.

In pursuing the train of thought to which these phenomena naturally point, M. Chevreul is led to remark how easily persons even of sound judgment may be deceived, by attributing to the physical qualities of the objects around them, effects in the production of which they have the chief agency; in other words, how easy it is to take illusions for realities every time we are engaged in phenomena in which our organs take a part, and that in circumstances which have not been sufficiently analyzed.

"Accordingly," says M. C., "let me be confined to make the pendulum oscillate over certain bodies, and to the experiments in which these oscillations were arrested when glass or resin was interposed between the pendulum and the bodies which seemed to cause its motion, and certainly I could have no reason not to believe in the divining wand, or any other thing of the same kind. Now, it will be easily conceived how men of credibility, and otherwise of enlightened minds, are sometimes induced to have recourse to ideas entirely chimerical for the purpose of explaining phenomena which in reality do not spring from the physical world with which we are acquainted. Once convinced that nothing truly extraordinary existed in the effects which had caused me so much surprise, I found myself in a disposition so different from that in which I was the first time I observed them, that long after, and at different periods, I tried to re-produce them, but always ineffectually."

THE CHOLERA AT MERRIMAC, N. H.

DR. MANNING, of Merrimac, has politely favored us with a memorandum of nineteen cases of cholera that have occurred in his practice. Of these, two were early in August, 1832, and the remaining seventeen

between the 20th of August and the 7th of October, 1833. These cases were generally marked by the usual symptoms so well known to characterize the malignant cholera. In some there was no vomiting, however—in others no purging—and in others he has remarked an absence of vomiting, purging, and spasms. The pain and sinking in these latter cases, the discoloration of the skin in those which were fatal, and the rapid progress of the disease to its termination, left no doubt in the mind of Dr. M. of the genuine character of the disease.

The remedies prescribed in these cases were various, consisting chiefly of such as have been found most useful in other towns. The success of these remedies in the hands of Dr. M. was truly gratifying, since only six of the cases terminated in death. The Doctor was himself a subject of the disease, and although he got well after two or three relapses, occasioned it appears by his haste to renew his philanthropic labors, yet the destroying angel passed not over his house.

EXPENSES OF THIS CITY FOR PRESERVING THE HEALTH OF ITS INHABITANTS.

THE great health of our favored city is in a measure owing to the unwearied efforts of its government in removing the causes of disease that are constantly accumulating in every crowded metropolis. The money spent in the accomplishment of this object, is spent in the strictest economy. If these sources of sickness were allowed to remain and exert their baneful influence on the inhabitants, the direct cost to the corporation and to the citizens in their individual capacities would be quite as great, and there is a clear gain of all the comfort and thousand attendant blessings of health. The communication with the surrounding country is uninterrupted, and, whether regarded in its relation to business or sociality, this intercourse is of no trifling importance. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the same liberality that has been shown the last year in the appropriations for the public health, will mark the proceedings of our Council in years to come.

We shall not go into the details of these expenditures the last twelve months; but it may not be uninteresting to the reader, briefly to allude to the several methods in which the public health has been protected, and the amounts expended in each department.

The *internal* health department includes sweeping the streets, and removing house-dirt and other nuisances, and for this there has been expended \$21,610 67.

The *external* health department includes the expenses of the Quarantine establishment, and has cost \$5,222 95.

To the above may be added the money expended to preserve the city against the *cholera*, viz. about \$23,600 00.

Making in all, more than fifty thousand dollars.

Gonorrhœa caused by the Ingestion of the Blennorrhagic Discharge into the Digestive Organs. By E. TAZENTRIE, M.D.—A man, aged 55, of licentious habits, lately married a woman of 20, and still continued his libertinage. He suspected his wife of infidelity; and he, having contracted gonorrhœa, purposed to cohabit with her, so that when he communicated his disease, he might accuse her more strongly. She observed his illness, and refused to comply with his wishes. He then hit

upon the expedient of mixing his gonorrhœal discharge with milk, beer, and other aliments. He used this artifice for eight or ten days, when his wife one morning found a basin of milk which he left for her breakfast, which contained a whitish matter. She accused her husband of an attempt to poison her, and took the bowl of fluid to an apothecary for analysis. The husband was intimidated, and acknowledged his perfidy. Dr. T. was consulted by the wife and her mother, and after a most careful examination, discovered the genitals perfectly healthful. Four days afterwards he found all the symptoms of gonorrhœa present. He treated it in the ordinary manner, and soon removed it. The husband also consulted him for his disease, and stated that on a former occasion he had infected another individual, on whom he sought revenge, with syphilis and gonorrhœa by the same proceeding; and that similar cases happened sometimes in the colonies. This case, the narrator argues, proves the specificity of blennorrhagia, and that it is a constitutional affection. With this conviction he gave mercury to the woman. He states that she did not labor under leucorrhœa, and could not contract her disease from her paramour, whose organs were sound.—*Archives Gen. de Médecine.*

Case in which several Biliary Calculi were discharged outwardly from an Abscess.—A man, aged forty-eight, applied at La Charité for advice, respecting a swelling which made its appearance several months before, at the lower edge of the false ribs on the right side. It was accompanied with constant severe pain; but there was neither vomiting, nor any symptom of jaundice; diarrhœa had occurred at intervals. The swelling, at first very painful and hard, became gradually softer; an eschar was formed by rubbing caustic potass on its surface; and when this separated, a considerable quantity of reddish purulent matter escaped. The pains, however, did not abate. This state of things continued for upwards of five months, the purulent discharge going on all this time, when the patient felt as if some rough or pointed body was irritating the wound in the side. One of his companions drew it away by means of scissors; and after its removal, a copious flow of pus followed, with great relief to the pain and general distress. On the recurrence of these, he applied at La Charité, and now it was ascertained that the substance which had been withdrawn was a biliary calculus; it was of the size of a pea. Upon probing the wound, the point of the stylet came in contact with something hard, rough, and moveable; when extracted, it proved to be another biliary calculus. Fortunately the constitutional disturbance was not great; there was considerable emaciation, but the appetite was good, the bowels regular and healthy, and the pus from the wound laudable.

During the subsequent week several calculi were discharged, and the patient improved in every respect. Cases similar to the one now reported have been recorded by various authors, as Petit, Sœmmering, Cheselden, &c. &c. Those who are interested to know the particulars are referred to the paper in the March number of the *Archives Générales.*

Lon. Med. and Surg. Jour.

Indian Ophthalmia treated with much success with Alum.—M. Sonty, in a report which he lately made to the Minister of the French Marine, mentions his great success in the treatment of a most violent and rapidly destructive epidemic—purulent ophthalmia, in the East Indies. At first he had employed antiphlogistic measures, but they entirely failed, or

rather the disease was too intense to be quickly enough affected by them. The natives employed very stimulating applications ; as, for example, a mixture of pepper, lemon-juice, and the juice of tamarind leaves, to which is added afterwards, roasted walnuts ; this paste they applied round the eyelids. M. Sonty soon found out the marvellously good effects of rock alum. He took a piece, with which he kept stirring, for eight or ten minutes, the white of an egg, which is then to be put into a white muslin bag. When this is to be used, the patient's head must be held back, and while the eyelids are kept open, a few drops of the liquid are to be squeezed from the bag upon the eye. This operation must be repeated very frequently—in some cases every half hour. The same treatment is applicable in all the stages of the disease, and generally cures it in from 24 to 48 hours.—*Archives Générales.*

Fatal Effects of a Tartar-Emetic Plaster.—M. Bricheteau, physician of the hospital Necker, reports the case of a girl aged 20, for whom a plaster, the surface of which was sprinkled with half a drachm of tartar-emetic, was ordered to be applied to the epigastrium, where several fresh leech-bites were at the time. In the course of two days a deep eschar was formed ; the subjacent cellular tissue rapidly destroyed, and the recti muscles made bare ; much febrile irritation was excited, aphthæ appeared in the mouth, and the parotids became immensely swelled ; the patient died. On dissection, the whole of the cavity of the mouth was found studded with aphthæ ; the inner surface of the small gut presented considerable redness and puffiness ; and the ulcer in the epigastrium extended deep to the posterior surface of the recti muscles.

Observations. Blisters have frequently been known to cause painful and most troublesome œdema ; and leech-bites have been followed by erysipelas and deep ulcerations. As a general remark, epispastics must be employed with caution, in weak, irritable and lymphatic females.—*Id.*

A Needle buried in a Man's Heart.—The following case was lately reported to the Academy of Medicine, by M. Renaudin. A man of the name of Louvet, a *limonadier*, from Calvados, came to Paris on the 15th June last, and took a lodging near the Barrier du Roule. He seemed very absent in manner ; spoke in monosyllables ; usually left his apartment early in the morning, and did not return till late at night. On the 29th there was found after him a note, in which he said he had always been an honest man, and would die so in the course of five or six days. On the 6th July he took to his bed, kept an obstinate silence, and was occasionally delirious. The following night he was found half strangled, with a cord round his neck : on being questioned, he said he did not know what he was doing, but that there were some villains who wanted to hang him, &c. He was taken to the Hôpital Beaujon next day ; when he said, that about two months before he had had shivering, vomiting, pain in the side, and bloody expectoration. The cerebral symptoms now became aggravated ; the pulse was 127 ; respiration 27 ; decubitus on the left side. In an effort to rise, he fell back and expired.

On examination of the body, a large quantity of sero-purulent fluid was found in the pericardium. The apex of the heart was adherent ; the heart itself more large and lengthened than natural. In the substance of the right ventricle was found embedded a needle, which extended into the cavity. The lungs were gathered up towards the top of the chest. No trace of a cicatrix by which the needle might have entered, could be discovered on the exterior of the body.—*Gazette des Hôpitaux.*

Alum as a Remedy for Cancer.—M. Guneau de Mussy speaks in terms of confidence of the efficacy of alum in cancerous diseases. After describing a peculiar pain in the feet, which he has noticed as a characteristic and distinctive symptom of cancer of the womb, he states that he has cured an enlargement of the prostate by the internal administration of alum in the doses of eight to sixteen grains. He has likewise employed with advantage, in cases of cancerous breasts, a solution of alum, with a little camphorated spirit. In some cases of gastralgia this means has been found beneficial.—*Jour. de Chim. Méd.*

Instrument for extracting Substances from the Bladder.—M. Segalas has invented a new instrument for extracting from the bladder any long, thin, supple body, such as pieces of a bougie or catheter. This instrument consists of a piece of wire, divided up half its length by three branches, whose extremities are unequally bent towards a centre. This wire is sheathed in a bent canula, slightly flattened, which serves as a conductor and constrictor; a screw is so attached as to effect a gradual and firm movement backwards.—*Ibid.*

Whole number of deaths in Boston for the week ending November 2, 36. Males, 17.—Females, 9. Of infants, 6—unknowns, 3—erysipelas, 1—old age, 3—cholera infantum, 1—dropsy on the brain, 1—intemperance, 2—consumption, 2—typhoid fever, 1—lung fever, 1—opium, 1—burning blood-vessel, 1—dropsy, 1—croup, 1—cancer, 1.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

BOYLSTON MEDICAL PRIZE QUESTIONS.

The Boylston Medical Committee of Harvard University hereby give notice, that the following prize questions for the year 1834 are now before the public, viz. :—

1st. "What is the true nature of *Folypus* in the nostrils, and in what manner may the disease be best treated?"

2d. "Are the restrictions on the entrance of vessels into port, called Quarantine laws, useful? If so, in what cases should they be applied?"

Disertations on these subjects must be transmitted, post paid, to JOHN C. WARRIS, M.D., Boston, on or before the first Wednesday of April, 1834.

The following questions are now offered for the year 1835, viz. :

1st. "What diet can be selected, which will ensure the greatest probable health and strength to the laborer in the climate of New England; quantity and quality, and the time and manner of taking it, to be considered?"

2d. "What are the diagnostic marks of cancer of the breast; and is this disease curable?"

Disertations on these subjects must be transmitted as above, on or before the first Wednesday in April, 1835.

The author of the successful dissertation on either of the above subjects will be entitled to Fifty Dollars, or a Gold Medal of that value, at his option.

Each dissertation must be accompanied with a sealed packet, on which shall be written some device or sentence, and within shall be enclosed the author's name and place of residence. The same device or sentence is to be written on the dissertation to which the packet is attached.

All unsuccessful dissertations are deposited with the Secretary, from whom they may be obtained, if called for within one year after they are received.

By an order adopted in the year 1826, the Secretary was directed to publish annually the following votes, viz.

1st. That the Board do not consider themselves as approving the doctrines contained in any of the dissertations to which the premiums may be adjudged.

2d. That in case of the publication of a successful dissertation, the author be considered as bound to print the above vote in connection therewith.

GEORGE HATWARD, Secretary.

Boston, August 18th, 1833.

ccp

Publishers of Newspapers and Medical Journals, throughout the United States, are respectfully requested to give the above an insertion.

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